

One Step Ahead

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One Step Ahead

by [spontaneoushazel](#)

Summary

She just never stops surprising him.

Notes

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Thirty seconds left on the clock.

Both coordinators left with one pokémon.

Points so close there was no telling who'd come out on top.

It always came down to this with them, neck at neck. Years and years of coordinating and no one could put on a more intense battle like these two rivals.

Lovers.

Equals.

Over time, they'd become quite the pair in the coordinating world. Where one went, the other followed. When one triumphed, the other would eventually reappear with more tricks up their sleeve. They drove one another forward. They were each other's strongest opponent, and strongest supporter.

How fitting that they'd meet face to face in the finals of their last Grand Festival.

Drew grinned at the scene unfolding in front of him; his mind was whirling. Time was just about up, and he knew he could only fit in one more combination. He'd make it a memorable one. "If you think I'm out of moves, then you're in for quite the shock! Roserade, jump and use Dazzling Gleam!"

A blinding, beautiful cascade of light flooded the entire stage, and the audience went wild from the thrill. It was a dangerous move, and everyone in the room knew. It didn't only hinder the opponents sight, but him and his pokémon's as well. Drew, however, knew this was only the beginning. "Now use Magical Leaf, Roserade!"

Beautiful colored leaves glowed through the Dazzling Gleam, flying straight for May's Beautifly. The audience was on the edge of their seat. Magical Leaf never missed its target. If Beautifly was hit, it was over.

But May didn't panic. She'd been ready for something like this.

"Beautifly use Quiver Dance and then a Silver Wind twirl, just like we practiced!"

Drew clenched his teeth. Quiver Dance must have been Beautifly's new move. And that meant...

He watched as Beautifly used Quiver Dance to gain speed, spinning at a breakneck speed while releasing one of the most powerful Silverwinds Drew had ever seen, just seconds before the Magical Leaf hit.

"C'est magnifique!" Yvonne, the Kalos region's contest MC, said into the microphone. "That Quiver Dance gave May's Beautifly enough speed to surround itself with a Silver Wind tornado, and it's captured Roserade's Magical Leaf! And with the glow of Dazzling Gleam, oh la la! This is a sight to behold!"

May finished up her command with a smile. "Okay Beautifly, now send that tornado spinning towards Roserade!"

"Roserade, dodge it and use Petal Dance!"

"Rose!" Roserade released a gorgeously devastating Petal Dance, but it was too late. Quiver Dance not only boosted speed, but special attack and defense as well. The petals did nothing to slow down Beautifly's attack.

The timer hit zero just as the marvelous Silver Wind collided with Roserade.

"That's it! Time's up! Who will be the winner?!"

Drew looked at May first, and she at him. They had faced off against each other time and time again for so long, each battle more grueling than the last, and this was no exception. He smiled at her, and for a brief second he thought that the sparkle in her eye was just as powerful as Roserade's Dazzling Gleam.

Both sets of eyes found the score board.

It had been a close match, but the winner was clear.

Drew stuck his hands in his pockets, clutching the small black box he'd kept with him through the whole Grand Festival. It had served as a good luck charm, and a reminder to make this Grand Festival count. Not only for him, but for May too.

“And the winner of this year’s Kalos Grand Festival, and our new top coordinator is—“

He smiled down at his pokémon, his partner through it all. She’d done great until the very end.

“May Maple from Hoenn! Félicitations!”

May’s hands flew to her mouth, her eyes turned up at her Beautifly who was flying in circles around her. The crowd was screaming both their names. She had done it. She was top coordinator.

Drew wondered if it was possible to feel prouder. He walked to the center of the stage, his Roserade behind him. May gave her pokémon one last hug before turning to him.

Then she was running

and jumping into his arms

and crying.

“We did it! We won! I won!”

Drew held her close and laughed. Catcalls and coos were flying at them left and right. “You know May, typically we’re supposed to meet in the middle and *shake hands*, but seeing as you’re new at this whole top coordinator thing, I’ll let it slide.”

“Oh, shut up Drew! Just congratulate me for kicking your butt out there and admit that your girlfriend is *just* as good a coordinator as you!” she said with a laugh.

“You’ve been as good as I am for a long time, May.”

“Now admit I’m better than you,” she said, poking him lightly in the chest.

He scoffed, pulling away and folding his arms. “Fat chance. Now go get your Ribbon Cup.”

xx

The Grand Festival after party in Kalos was much grander than those held in the other regions Drew had competed in, but he left that one just as quickly as he had the others. It didn’t matter to him what people would say. He knew May would join him soon enough. It was tradition.

He didn’t expect to find her already outside, leaned up comfortably against a tree. “I was wondering how long you’d make me wait.”

He smiled, the familiarity of her words making his chest tighten. They were same words he said to her after winning the Sinnoh Grand Festival. He remembered it well. Not only did he achieve his dreams of becoming top coordinator that night, but also achieved his dreams of becoming *hers*.

He was exceedingly aware of the weight in his pocket as he looked at her, clad in a beautiful red dress, hair brought up in an elegant bun. Hopefully tonight would be another unforgettable one.

He cocked his head to the side, responding in the same way she had years ago. “Shouldn’t you be inside? That party is being held in *your* honor, you know.”

May flicked her hair, mocking him. “You should know my style by now,” she said before bursting into a fit of laughter. “Jeez, Drew! How were you able to say such a lame thing with a straight face?!”

Drew simply smirked, not bothering to respond, and took her hand. "There's a beach not too far from here. Why don't we take a walk?"

May's head shot up, eyes wide as she stared at him and nodded. "O-kay, yeah!" she said, her voice higher than normal. She was making the same face she made right before she performed an appeal routine using luck based moves like assist or metronome; a May classic. It was the same face she made when they had their first kiss, their first battle against each other as a couple, their first night alone together.

May was nervous.

He wondered if she knew what he was planning. He had to fight the urge to place his hand in his pocket and touch the box.

The shore was only a five minute walk, and the time spent walking was filled with conversation about their battle. She gushed about the intensity of it, complimenting him on his combinations. He questioned how long she had been waiting to use Quiver Dance. She laughed and placed a finger on her lips. A lady never tells.

Finally they were standing before a vast ocean, the one thing that connected all the regions, all the pokémon, and all the people. May took her shoes off and pulled her dress up before sticking her feet in. She hummed to herself before she spoke. "I can't believe that was it."

Their last contest.

Halfway through the contest season, May had been offered a job as a coordinating counselor in Slateport City. Not long after, as if even the world of coordinating couldn't handle the idea of the duo being separated, Drew had been contacted with an offer to be a permanent contest judge in the Hoenn region. It would be a huge step for each of them.

They both accepted, and there was already an apartment in Slateport waiting for them. A home.

A future.

Drew cleared his throat. "It was quite the finale."

"Yeah," May whispered, closing her eyes and letting the sea breeze caress her face. She looked up at the full moon and wondered if she'd be able to shine as bright through all the different phases of her life as the moon did. "I'm glad it was you I was facing off against in the finale."

"I can't imagine it any other way."

The faint sound of a violin being played could be heard, harmonizing with the push and pull of the tide. Drew felt his heart against his chest and he knew the moment had come. It was exactly as he'd pictured it. The breeze in her hair, the moonlight shining down on them, the waves sliding up and down in encouragement.

"We met on a beach like this one," he said, the words soft and edged with a teasing smile. "You were using those tacky frisbees." She had been a rookie then, and he never would have thought she'd make it so far.

He'd been so wrong.

She huffed, folding her arms against her chest. She continued to face the water, her back to him. "Hey! That frisbee appeal got me and my Beautifly to the second round in that contest!"

He remembered. He'd been watching her from the sidelines, and she surprised him -almost impressed him- that day. "You've come a long way since then, May."

She shuffled. "Thanks. I know! Top Coordinator, remember?"

He smiled. They both had come a long way. He had her to thank for a lot of it. He did not even want to imagine what his life would be like without her in it.

He always wanted her in it.

And here they were, on another beach, the perfect place to start a new chapter of their lives. If he was going to ask her, it was now or never.

"Drew, I'm really glad I met you. I..."

She hesitated. He got down on one knee.

She took a deep breath. He pulled the box out of his pocket.

She turned towards him.

"Drew, will you marry me?"

Her eyes locked onto the open box in his hands right as the words left her mouth.

She took a few moments to put together what was going on before she screamed. "*Drew!*"

He stared at her, speechless. And Drew was rarely speechless.

May, on the other hand, had plenty to say. "You were about to propose! And you- Is that? Oh wow it's so pretty!" She reached down and snatched the box out of his hand. He grunted, still at a loss for words. "This ring is perfect. It's better than one I would have picked for myself. And...Hey wait, what is that?" She brought the ring closer to face. There were words engraved on the side.

For May, the loveliest rose of all.

"Oh my! Drew, that's so cheesy!" A blush spread across her cheeks like wildfire. "But so sweet. You got this for me?"

"I can't think of any other Mays I'd be proposing too." His voice was shaky.

"I can't believe you're proposing!"

"I can't believe you beat me to it."

She lurched forward then, as if remembering what she'd been asking before she saw the ring. "O-oh yeah!" She let out a nervous laugh, "Guess I'm just one step ahead of you today!"

"Guess so." Drew finally stood up, closing the empty box and returning it to his pocket. He eyed the ring in her hand, and held out his palm. "May I?" She slowly nodded as he gently took the ring between his fingers, shaking as he slowly slid the ring up her bare ring finger. Never once did he look away from her.

She stared at the ring on her finger, and slowly the corners of her lips were curving upward into a smile that could put the moonbeams shining down on them to shame. "So, is this your way of saying yes?"

“It’d be awkward to say no at this point.”

She nudged his arm. “Oh, shut up. You *love* me,” she started to sing. “You wanna *marry* me!” She waved her left hand in front of his face. “You got me a *riiiiiing!*”

Swiftly, Drew reached up and grabbed her hands, entwining his fingers with hers tightly. “Because unlike you, May, I know how to properly ask for one’s hand.”

“You’re just mad I beat you.”

“I shouldn’t be surprised.” He brought his face closer and closer until he was whispering against her lips. “You have always had a way of surprising me.”

End Notes

ahhhh i had so much fun writing this!

i was actually writing another contestshipping fic but then this just kind of happened but i'm happy with it.

thanks for reading oxo

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